

Coming Soon!   Coming Soon!   Coming Soon!   Coming Soon!   Coming Soon!

**I**n late November all DoD personnel will begin using a new government travel card. We, in the FM community, must work to ensure a successful transition. This article is designed to inform you about the new card and the transition.

The contract with American Express (AmEx) to provide a government travel card expires in November. A NationsBank Visa card won the competition for the new contract and will replace the American Express card effective 30 November 1998. In most respects the new card will be the same as the old one. Like the current AmEx card, the new one will be for official travel only, and most policies will remain unchanged. Using the new card for government travel should still be about three times cheaper for the Air Force than using cash, and travelers will still have the convenience of a travel card rather than having to wait for cash advances.

But the new card will offer some important advantages. Visa gives travelers access to 14.5 million merchants and 482,000 ATMs, compared to 2.3 million merchants and 84,000 ATMs available with American Express. The ATM fee will be reduced from 2.75% to 1.9%. The EAGLS software package available with the new card will be on-line, real time, and internet capable. This user-friendly software performs card maintenance, delivers reports and charts, and provides training and newsletters.

The major problem with the American Express card has been the time required to handle delinquencies. The new card will offer some options that should help reduce delinquencies. Wider acceptance of Visa will permit lower adjustable ATM cash limits, which may reduce the size of delinquencies. Delinquent cardholders will remain on report only for six months. Commanders can lower spending limits electronically, by name or by unit. The new contract also provides for credit checks for new cardholders, with commanders determining whether to issue cards to anyone with a bad credit history. Policies for credit checks are currently being determined.

SAF/FM will take the lead in arranging publicity and training associated with the card. A conference has already been held for major command program coordinators, and another followed in September. Training for base-level program coordinators started in September. We will also use AFNEWS and other methods to publicize the shift to cardholders as the changeover date approaches.

Getting the new card to the right people is key since the American Express card will not longer be available for use after 29 November. The NationsBank will distribute the new card in October. Cards will be made available to all current cardholders, except those who are delinquent in their payments by 60 days or more. Major commands can choose to have the cards mailed to bases for distribution or to individuals. Because the bank will have to determine mailing addresses in August, there will inevitably be a number of cases where people have moved. We are working on a follow-up procedure to redirect missent cards.

We will keep you informed about the new travel card through your FMs. If you have questions, please contact your squadron or base-level program coordinator.

Working together we can continue to garner the significant benefits of the government travel card while reducing the time required to administer the program.

Coming Soon!

# A New Travel Card

We in FM must work  
to ensure a successful  
transition.